

# 2d artist

Concept art, digital and matte painting magazine  
Issue 067 July 2011

## Interview

Wu Xiaojun



## Articles

Sketchbook of  
Seyyed Ghassem Farhany



## The Gallery

Simon Goinard, JXing  
Sasha Gorec, plus more!



# CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

**Charlie Bowater** looks at how to design characters with specific features.

## Heavy Metal Pin-Up

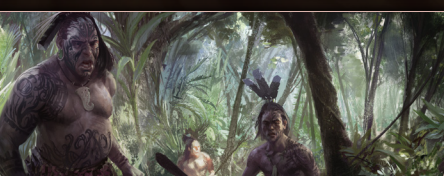
**Serge Birault** creates this gorgeous Heavy Metal **Pin-Up** in the this month's issue.

## Matte Painting

In the second chapter of the **Matte Painting** series **Piotrek Swigut** shows us how to add the sky to your scene.

## Tribal Warriors

**Chase Toole** shows us how to paint **Maori warriors** in this month's installment of our **Painting Tribal Warriors** series.







## Editorial

Hello and welcome to the July issue of 2DArtist magazine. Some of you will be coming to the end of your school year, or just about to start your summer break so now is the ideal time to get stuck into some digital painting. This issue is an absolute cracker, so hopefully there is something in here that will help you get started.

This month's cover is the handiwork of the fantastic UK based artist **Charlie Bowater**. Charlie is a great artist who blows us away with every new image and in this issue she kick starts our new series Character Painting/Portrayal. This is a really handy series that will be teaching us how to paint certain characteristics and features that can add some story and interest to our characters. In this issue Charlie will be showing us how she painted her stunning female character and will be talking us through how she made her look gaunt.

**Serge Birault** blows us away yet again in this issue by showing us how he designed and painted his outstanding Heavy Metal Pin- Up girl. One of the things that I have really enjoyed about Serge's tutorials is that he is great at sharing his influences with us and telling us why he designs his characters in a certain way. Sadly there is only one chapter left after this one, but it should be a goody as Serge will be tackling a Sci-Fi Pin-Up.

Last month we started our Painting tribal Warriors series with an Aztec Warrior done by our very own Rich Tilbury. In this issue 2DArtist new comer **Chase Tool** continues the series for us by painting a scene containing some cool Maori warriors. Chase does a great job of his first tutorial for us and talks us through how he painted his cool jungle scene and Maori warriors.

This issue is not all about characters though. If you are more of an environment person you should take a look at the next chapter of our amazing Matte painting series by **Piotrek Swigut**. Matte painting is a really difficult yet Piotrek makes it look easy in this amazing series. In this issue Piotrek will be showing us how to start to incorporate images starting by adding the sky.



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This month's interview is with a really cool artist whose work I really like **Wu Xiaojun**. Wu is a great artist and although he doesn't speak very much English he kindly agreed to being interviewed by us. Wu tells us about his love for Medieval art and shows us some of his fantastic work. This month's Making Of and Sketchbook are also worth looking into.

**Seyyed Ghassem Farhany** shares some of his cool sketches of creatures from Persian mythology with us in the sketchbook article. **Alex Andreyev** shows us how he painted his image Under the Rain, taking it from a value sketch to a full color painting.

I am sure that you will agree that this is another stunning issue of 2DArtist. The gallery is also full of further inspiration in this month's gallery which features work from Ivan Kashubo, Jeremy love, Simon Goinard and many more amazing artists. I hope you have a creative summer and if you have any work you would like to share with us we would love to see it.





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For optimum viewing of the magazine it is recommended that you have the latest Acrobat Reader installed.

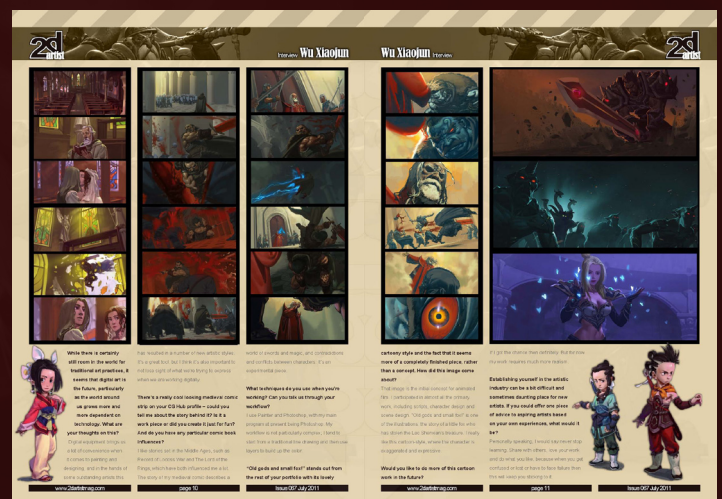
You can download it for free here: [DOWNLOAD!](#)

To view the many double-page spreads featured in 2D Artist magazine, you can set the reader to display 'two-up', which will show double-page spreads as one large landscape image:

1. Open the magazine in Reader;
2. Go to the **View** menu, then **Page display**;
3. Select **Two-up Continuous**, making sure that **Show Cover Page** is also selected.

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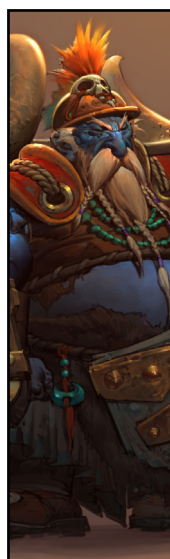




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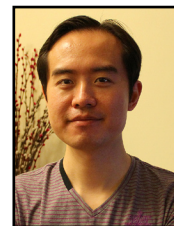
Every month many artists around the world contribute to **3DCreative** and **2DArtist** magazines. Here you can find out a bit more about them!

If you would like to be a part of **3DCreative** or **2DArtist** magazine then please contact: [simon@3dtotal.com](mailto:simon@3dtotal.com)

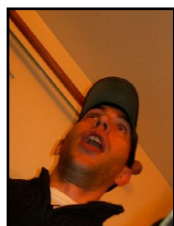


### Wu Xiaojun

Wu Xiaojun is an artist who sees the flow of images in his mind and tries to catch it and express it so he can share his imagination with everyone.



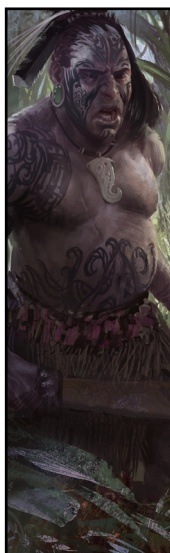
<http://essence750.cghub.com/>  
[essence750@163.com](mailto:essence750@163.com)



### Chase Toole

Chase Toole (aka tooled) is a concept artist and freelance illustrator working out of Montreal Canada. Chase is currently working on AAA titles with the immensely talented team at THQ Montreal. He enjoys storytelling and creating moody images, and is always looking for inspiration in strange places and new experiences."

<http://chimpsmack.blogspot.com/>  
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### Seyyed Ghassem Farhany

Ghassem Farhany is a 27 year old who has worked as a freelance concept artist and illustrator for more than 12 years. His main interest is creature design and he is currently working on his own art book about the creatures of Persian Mythology.



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[gh.farhany@gmail.com](mailto:gh.farhany@gmail.com)



### Piotrek Swigut

Piotrek Swigut is a concept artist and matte painter from Poland specializing in work for film and video games.

Soon after graduating he was spotted by Blizzard Entertainment where he had the opportunity to create cinematics for *World of Warcraft*, *Starcraft* and *Diablo*. He recently left Blizzard to work on the new *Conan the Barbarian* (2011) movie.

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### Charlie Bowater

Born in the UK in 1988 and raised on 90's cartoons Charlie Bowater spent her childhood drawing her favourite characters and insisting she'd grow up to be an animator. A lot has changed since then but her love of art hasn't. Charlie is an illustrator and self taught digital artist. She lives in Newcastle upon Tyne and works as a concept artist for Atomhawk.



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# WU XIAOJUN

Wu Xiaojun hails from Shanghai China and is a concept and storyboard designer for a games company. In this exclusive 2DArtist interview we get the chance to find out more about the artist behind the artwork, and pick his brains about the recent digital revolution.



**“Digital equipment brings us a lot of convenience when it comes to painting and designing, and in the hands of some outstanding artists this has resulted in a number of new artistic styles”**





Hi! Now I have to admit that I had a bit of trouble preparing for this interview because I like to start by checking out an artist's website and yours is all in Chinese! (I think – I must admit my knowledge of Oriental languages is non-existent so please correct me if I'm wrong). Anyway, that does give me the perfect opening to ask: who are you and what do you do for a living?

My name is Wu Xiaojun and I was born in Shanghai, China. I'm currently working for a games studio that mainly develops online games and my work is concept design and storyboard design.

Can you tell me about any of the online games you've worked on? Do you have a favorite project? And what kind of games do you like to play in your free time?

I've worked on games including *The World of Legend* and *Magic Land*. These games are mostly being operated in China at the moment. Currently I'm doing concept design for *Shaft Legend*, which I'd say has probably been my favorite project so far. In my free time, I like to play *World of Warcraft*.

Ah, *World of Warcraft* – that's one disturbingly addictive game! I still miss my pre-Burning Crusade level 70 Elf Druid... she was bad ass [Laughs]. Anyway, moving

on – we find that our artists have a real mix of backgrounds, with some having studied art at college, while others are completely self-taught. What kind of training have you had, if any?

I majored in Architectural Design at school, but

I've always loved movies and manga so when I got the chance I took a job as an animator. A few years later I was lucky enough to get some film director training. So I'm basically self-taught and am constantly learning and developing my style in my spare time.





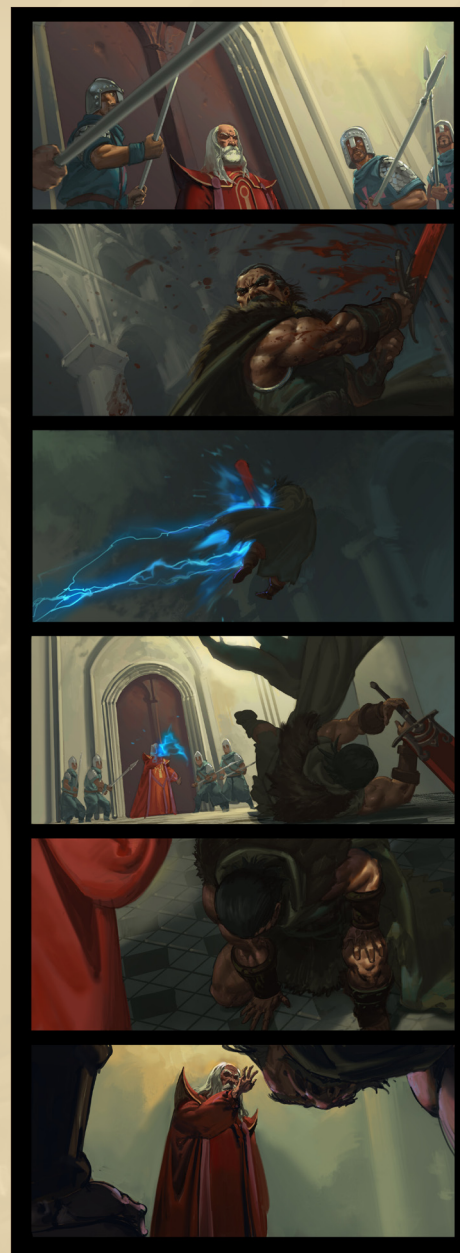
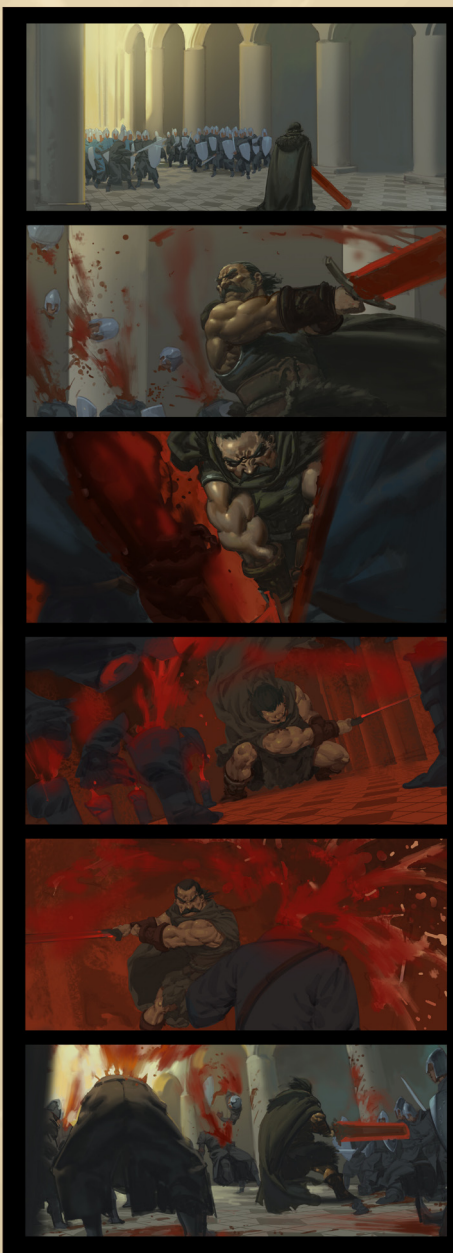
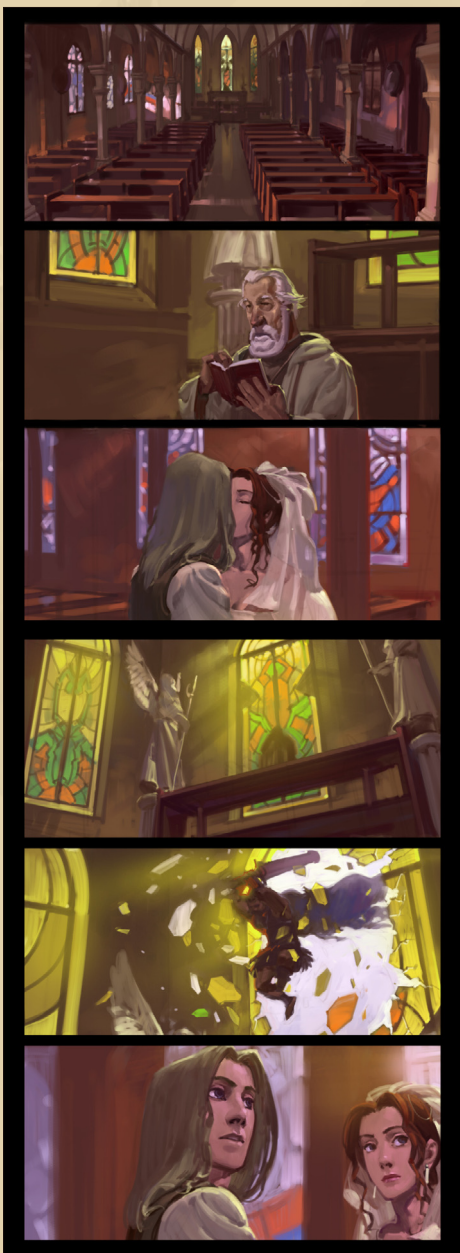






12 2010.





While there is certainly still room in the world for traditional art practices, it seems that digital art is the future, particularly as the world around us grows more and more dependent on technology. What are your thoughts on this?

Digital equipment brings us a lot of convenience when it comes to painting and designing, and in the hands of some outstanding artists this

has resulted in a number of new artistic styles. It's a great tool, but I think it's also important to not lose sight of what we're trying to express when we are working digitally.

There's a really cool looking medieval comic strip on your CG Hub profile – could you tell me about the story behind it? Is it a work piece or did you create it just for fun? And do you have any particular comic book influences?

I like stories set in the Middle Ages, such as *Record of Lodoss War* and *The Lord of the Rings*, which have both influenced me a lot. The story of my medieval comic describes a

world of swords and magic, and contradictions and conflicts between characters. It's an experimental piece.

What techniques do you use when you're working? Can you talk us through your workflow?

I use Painter and Photoshop, with my main program at present being Photoshop. My workflow is not particularly complex; I tend to start from a traditional line drawing and then use layers to build up the color.

“Old gods and small fox!” stands out from the rest of your portfolio with its lovely





**cartoony style and the fact that it seems more of a completely finished piece, rather than a concept. How did this image come about?**

That image is the initial concept for an animated film. I participated in almost all the primary work including scripts, character design and scene design. "Old gods and small fox!" is one of the illustrations: the story of a little fox who has stolen the Lao Shenxian's treasure. I really like this cartoon-style, where the character is exaggerated and expressive.

**Would you like to do more of this cartoon work in the future?**



If I got the chance then definitely. But for now my work requires much more realism.

**Establishing yourself in the artistic industry can sometimes be a difficult and daunting prospect for new artists, particularly if they don't have any contacts. If you could offer one piece of advice to aspiring artists based on your own experiences, what would it be?**

Personally speaking, I would say never stop learning. Share with others, love your work and do what you like, because when you get confused or lost or have to face failure then this will help you to keep working at it.





# Wu Xiaojun

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Interview by: Jo Hargreaves





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"Aspenjarush was an ancient demon from Persian mythology. He was responsible for the dryness of the earth and has many appearances"



## SKETCHBOOK OF SEYYED GHASSEM FARHANY

This month's sketchbook takes a look into the mind of Seyyed Ghassem Farhany. Seyyed is obsessed with drawing monsters and in particular monsters from Persian mythology and in this article he shows us that there is a lot more to Persian mythology than you would think.



## SKETCHBOOK OF SEYYED GHASSEM FARHANY



01

I spend more time on sketching than I do on finished images. I really like exploring the variety of different things in my imaginary world.

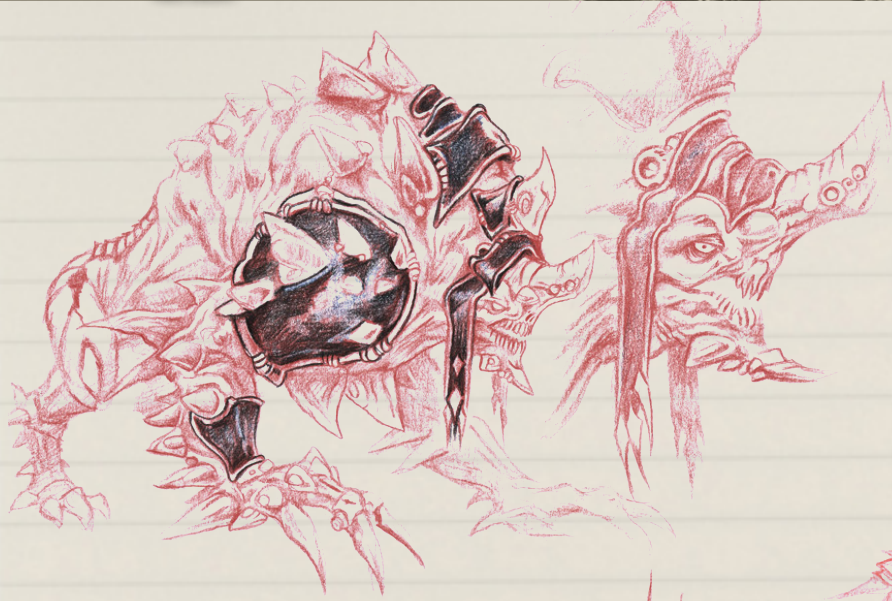
No one can separate me from my sketchbook. I carry it everywhere I go. I try to draw and be interested in everything.

I usually pick a theme and start to develop it (Fig.01 – 02). I really like seeing how a raw and initial sketch can eventually be developed into something more iconic, and can turn into a new design that I hadn't thought of at the start. The theme for these images was a mountain rider.



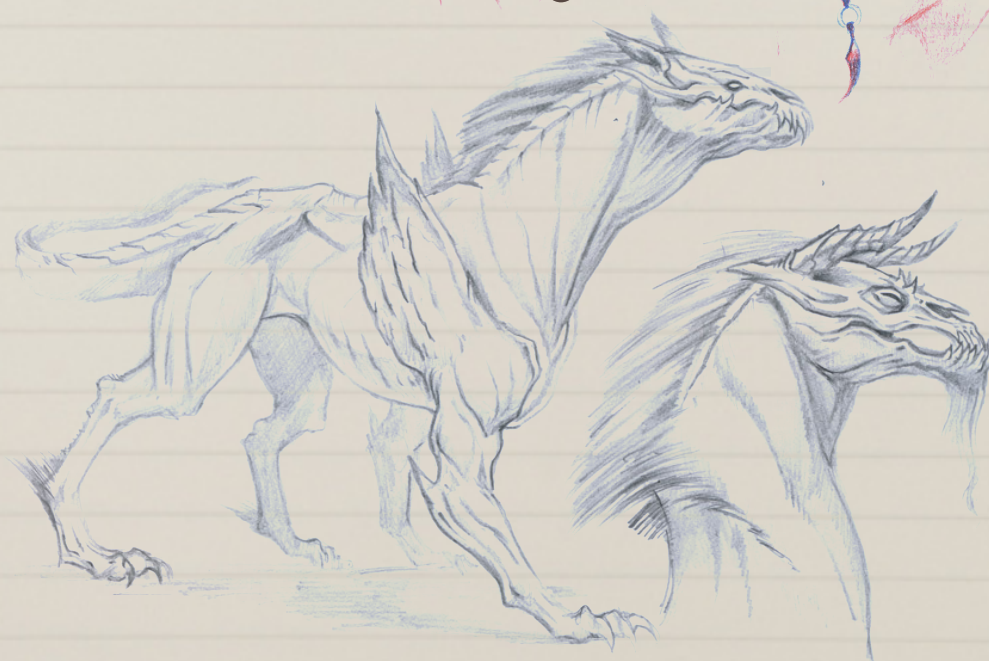
02





In Fig.03 – 04 I was trying to draw creepy, hunky beasts. I sometimes use red pencil. I liked playing with the rider's position in Fig.03.

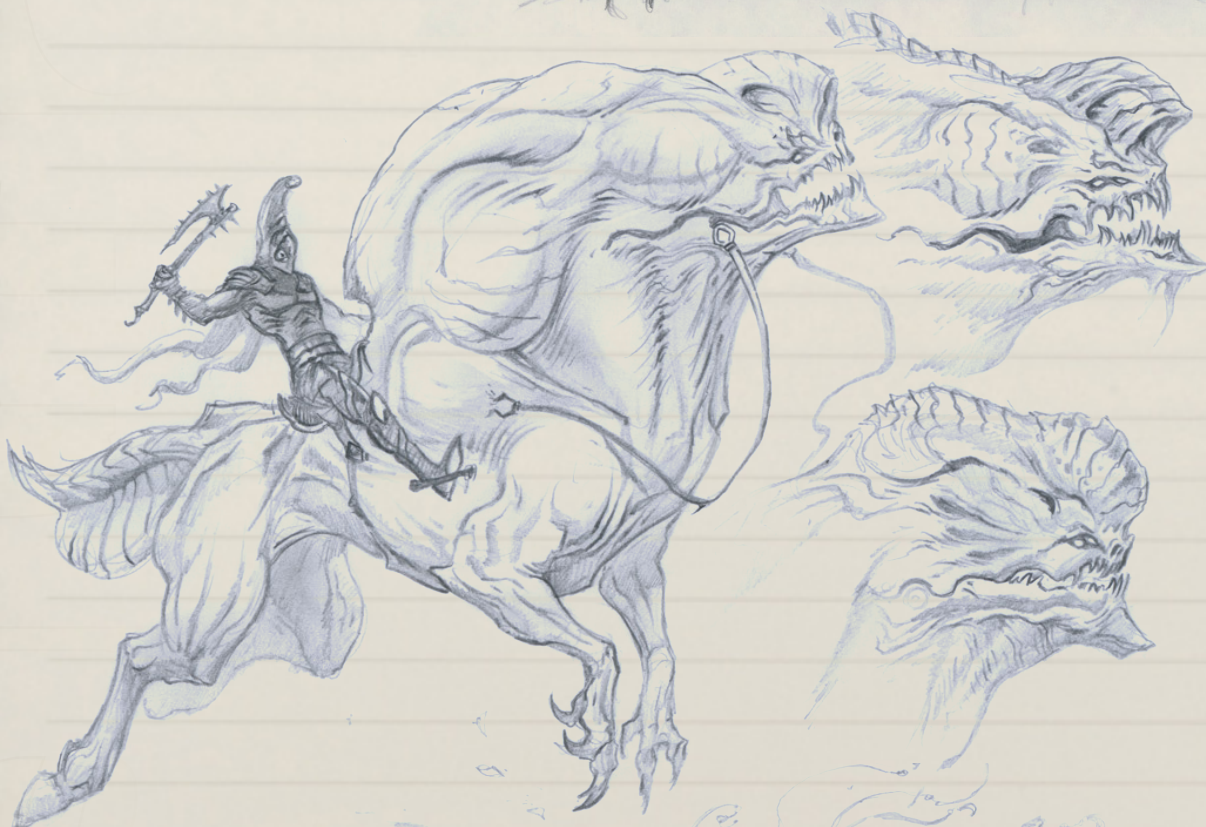
In Fig.05 I tried two things. One was making the lower jaw thicker than the upper. The other was adding the weird eyes.





I prefer to draw everything in motion  
(Fig.06). In this image I used the hard plates  
on the back of the creature to give it an  
aerodynamic look.

Fig.07 – 08 show more mounted riders. You  
can see how my approach to this theme is  
different to the last images, especially in the  
head area.



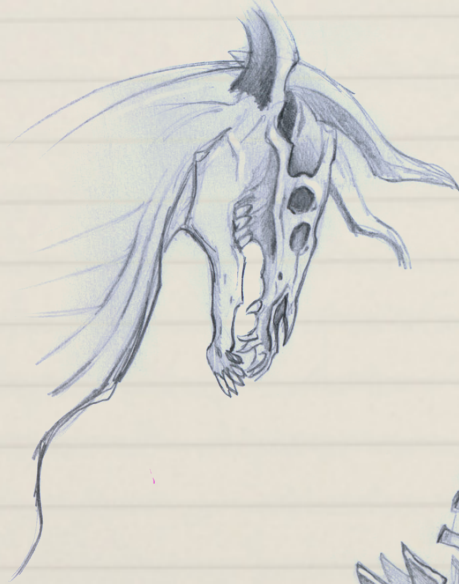


Aspenjarush was an ancient demon from Persian mythology (Fig.09 – 11). He was responsible for the dryness of the earth and has many appearances. One of them was a skinny black horse.

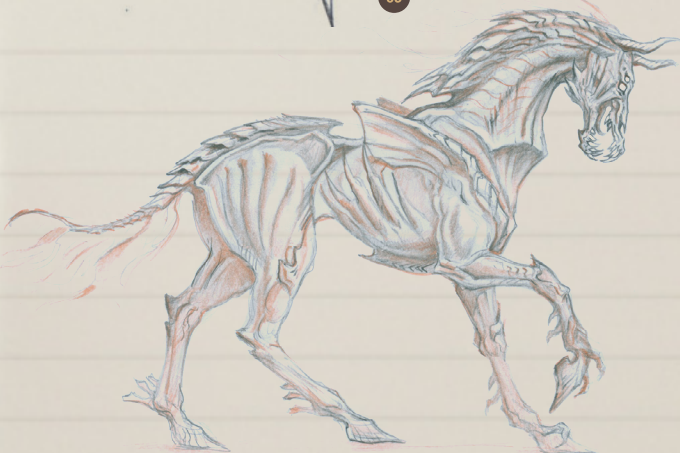
The Aposh was a demon that was a partner of Aspenjarush. They fought Tishtar, the God of Rain, together (Fig.12).



09



10



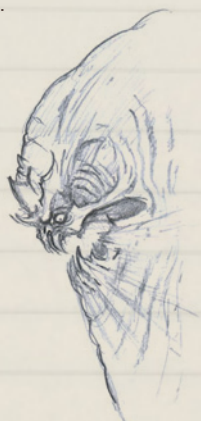
11



12



The idea of this image was to design a tomb guardian that was floating in the air (Fig.13).



G.H. Farhany



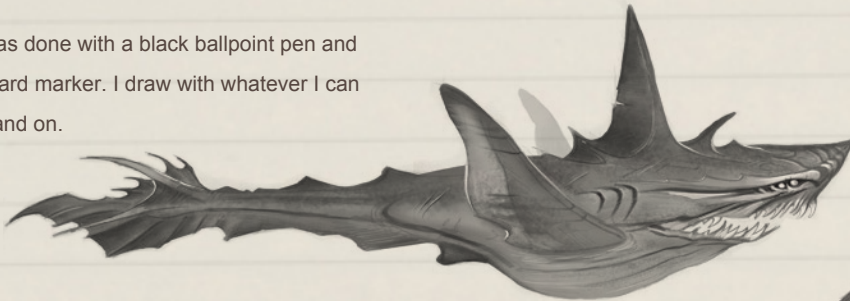


These are mutant sharks (Fig.14 – 15). After gathering some shark references I did some line drawings. When I had done that I did a value painting and added some lighting and texture.

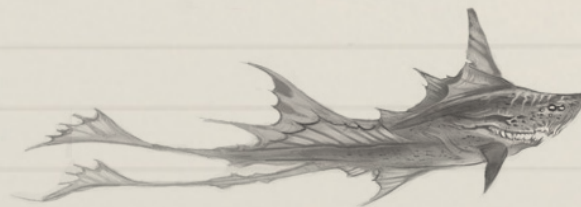
Fig.16 was done with a black ballpoint pen and with a board marker. I draw with whatever I can lay my hand on.



14



15



16



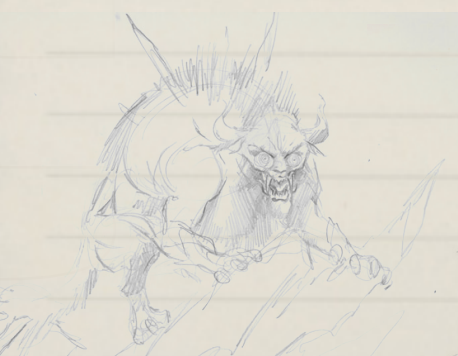
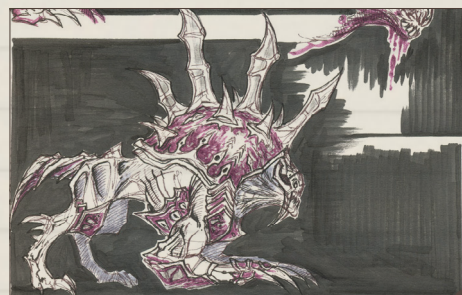
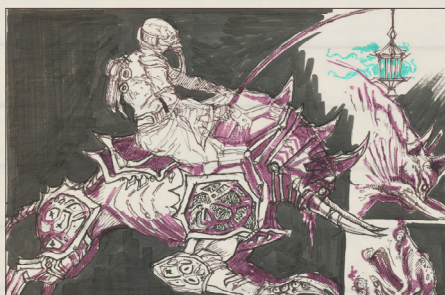
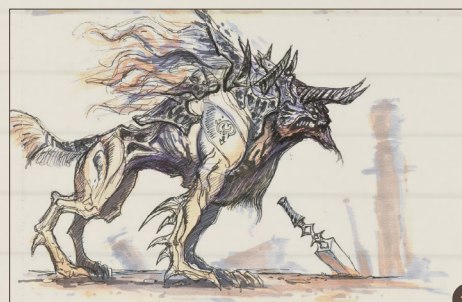
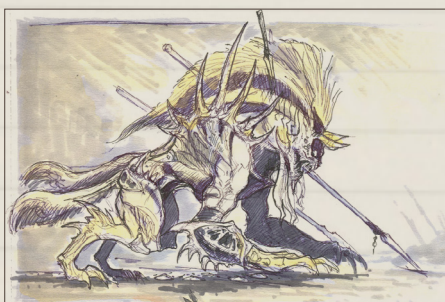


Fig.17 shows another Aposh design.

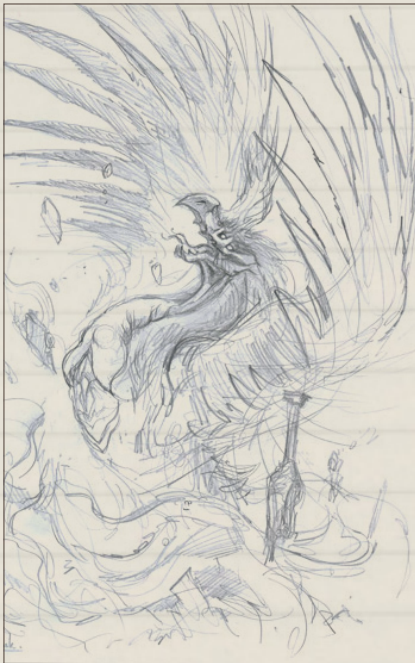
When I pick a theme it sticks with me for months or even years until I am satisfied with the result (Fig.18).

Fig.19 shows my Aposh process. I started with light and loose shapes such as ellipses to build up the overall gesture. Then I started to develop the mage from there.

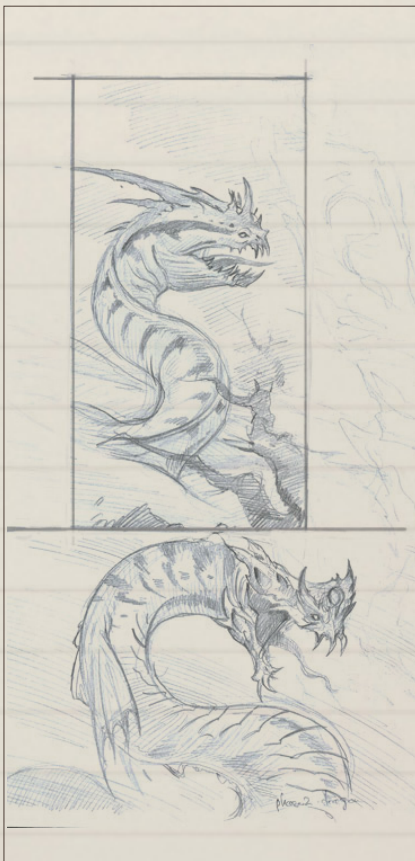
You can see how the hand position changed and how this affected the overall gesture, which was much better in the initial sketch (Fig.20).







21



22

Some of my sketches end up as finished illustrations. This is the way I usually work (Fig.21 – 22).





Fig.23 shows a fish hunter. As an artist you can never get separated from your environment and culture. I live in small city where fishing is very important.

The costume design is what gives this loose character his identity and personality (Fig.24).







In Fig.25 I was exploring and having fun with Corel Painter.

Separating foreground and background is what make an illustration more readable for the viewer (Fig.26).



Fig.27 shows a detailed image that has a lot of matte painting in it.

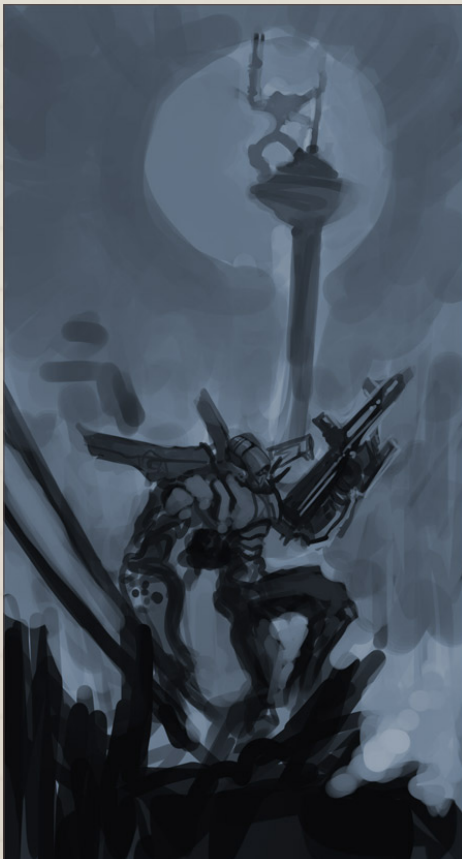
## SEYYED GHASSEM FARHANY

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# THE GALLERY

This month we feature:

Claudio Rodriguez Valdes

David Munoz Velazquez

Simon Goinard

Ivan Kashubo

Sasha Gorec

Jeremy Love

George Guo

JP Rasanen

Fil Barlow

JXing





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## Ice Creature

Fil Barlow

<http://www.artopia1.com/>

[fil@artopia1.com](mailto:fil@artopia1.com)

(Above)



SASHA-GOREC  
[sasha-gorec.livejournal.com](http://sasha-gorec.livejournal.com)

## My Home Mermaid

Sasha Gorec

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(Right)







**Drive `G`**

Ivan Kashubo

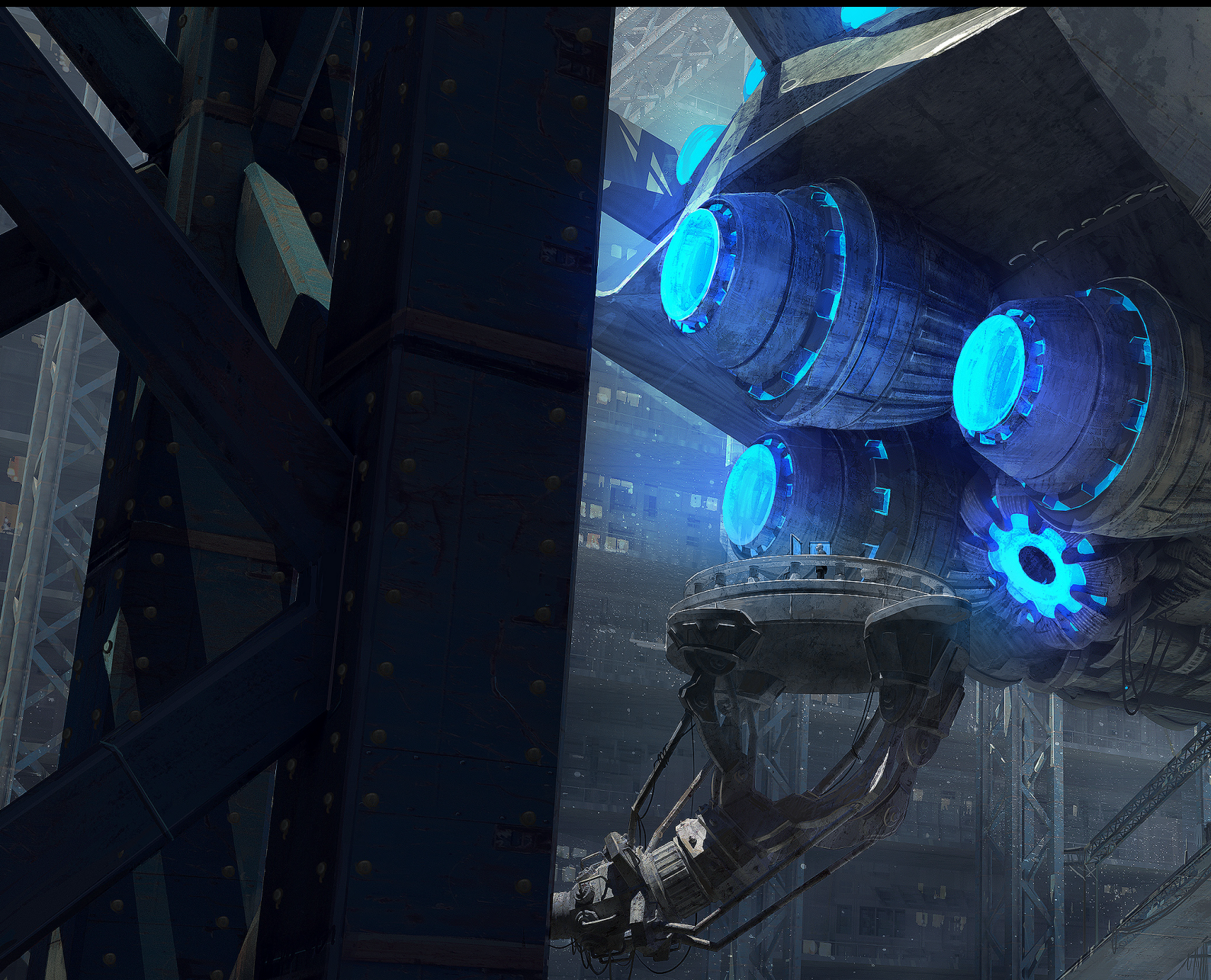
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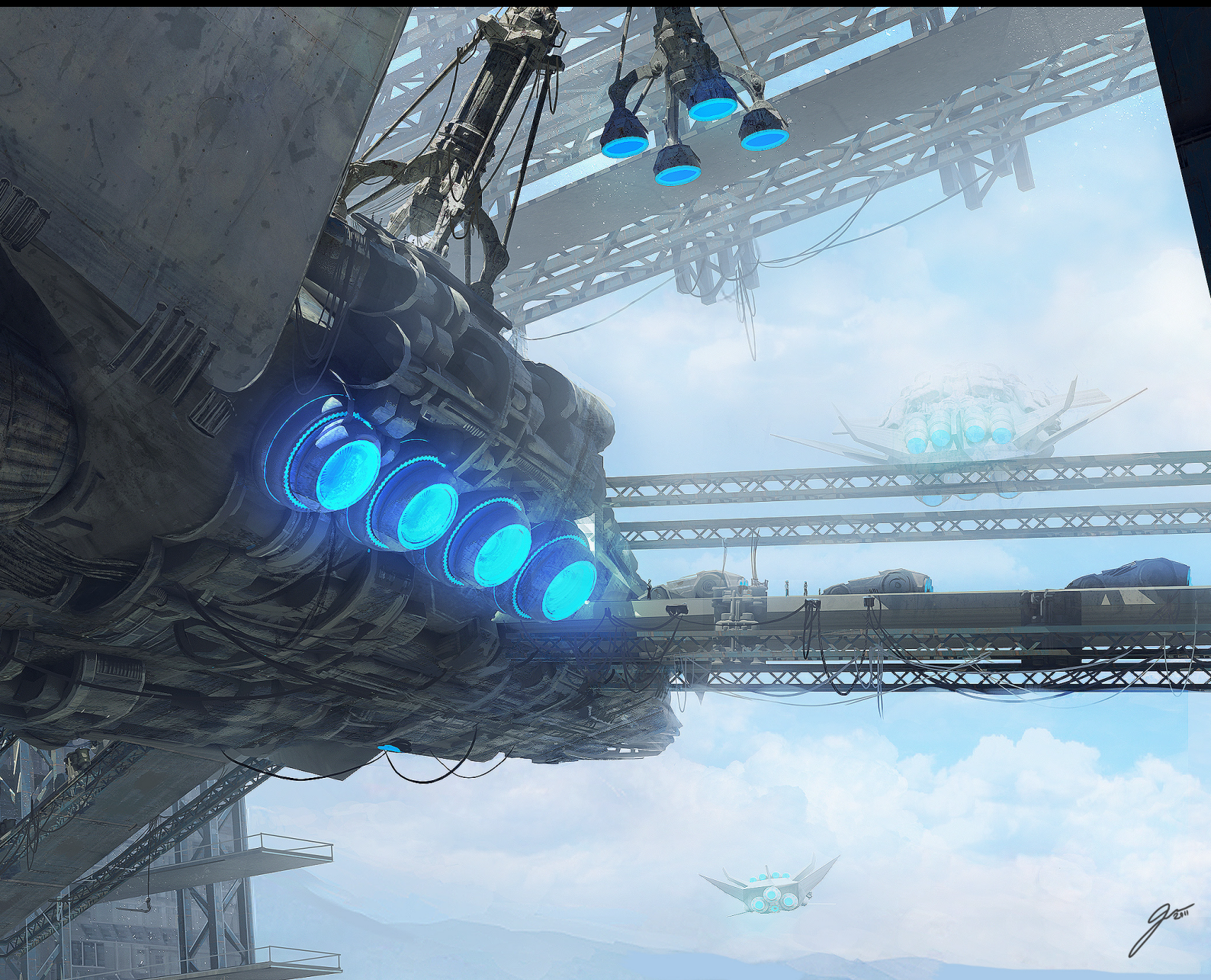


• **GunDrive** •









JP

## Futuristic illustration

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# Loftslag Blade

David Munoz Velazquez

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# Dragoon

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produced by george guo



# Evil Army

Jeremy Love

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# Little Mermaid Re-Imagined

Claudio Rodriguez Valdes

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Rodriguez



## Rabbit Year

JXing

[angusyap@hotmail.com](mailto:angusyap@hotmail.com)

(Right)



## Era 1 Concept 2

Simon Goinard

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(Below)





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In this eBook series our artists will be teaching us how to use information about tribes from the past and present to design new characters. The artists involved will gather references about their chosen tribal warrior and then translate this information into a dynamic character illustration. Character design is huge in both the game and movie industries and this eBook is a great guide as to how to design a character from a brief.

**Chapter 1 | June Issue 066**  
Aztec

**Chapter 2 | This Issue**  
Maori

**Chapter 3 | Next Issue**  
Red Indian

**Chapter 4 | September Issue 069**  
Viking

**Chapter 5 | October Issue 070**  
Fantasy

# Tribal Warriors <sup>Painting</sup>





01

## Chapter 02: Maori

Software Used: Photoshop

I usually start my pieces by using color to sketch out fairly abstract shapes using an approximate palette. Since the piece I am working on is set in a jungle scene it seems appropriate to use greens, blues and yellows (with some reds and purples to balance). I tend to use a lot of large brushes with rough edges at this stage so I can try and get some “random” shapes that might inspire ideas and help the concept along (Fig.01).



03



02

Adding some figures early on is pretty important because it helps maintain a cohesiveness in the colors and in the shape of the composition. This part is usually pretty tricky because you must think about the composition, narrative, scale, mood etc. I indicate the light direction and intensity in this part because I like to see the potential drama (Fig.02).

Creating eye movement is pretty important and I try to do this by creating blocks of interest and visual noise. I create the visual noise using custom brushes. I like painting textures so this stage is usually the most fun (Fig.03).

When I want to really ramp up the amount of noise in an image I create a new layer in





04

Photoshop and make a lot of large choppy marks. I then create a layer mask and mask parts out using a smaller textured brush (**Fig.04**).

Since the guy in the middle (farthest to the right) is pretty centrally located and has a decent amount of contrast on him he's basically the main character of the narrative, so I start fleshing out his design first (**Fig.05**).

As I move forward with the piece I usually play with color adjustments and levels just to freshen my eye. Sometimes I find some nice



05

color schemes this way. I also have two hotkeys set to flip the canvas; one flips vertical and the other flips horizontal and this has been pretty important in helping me to see errors in my painting (**Fig.06**).

I want the channel of light to split the group of tribesmen to add a little depth and mood. The light hitting the forest floor is also creating some much needed eye movement across the illustration. I add a spear to chop up some of



06





07

the verticals and create some framing for the background guys. It's a gamble to put the spear in there and I'll probably end up taking it out, but it's good to make these mistakes as they teach us more about ourselves (**Fig.07**).

Whenever I start painting smooth surfaces like skin or leaves I try to make as few strokes as possible. I feel when I start going over the same mark I totally wreck what I am doing. I am trying to get into habit of making the mark and walking away, so to speak. As I am working the details of the piece in I am constantly zooming out to see if what I just painted is helping out

or just causing unwanted noise. I also squint at my work a lot as it means I can see the forms without all the details (**Fig.08**).

I am starting to see the potential for this brute in the foreground. His frame and posture are going to become pretty important so I'll be revisiting him quite a bit too.

I want him to be really imposing so I use the Lasso tool to select him and copy and paste him into a new layer, where I modify his body and give him the beginnings of a face (**Fig.09**).

I start flipping through my references at this point to make sure I am heading in the right direction with the weapons and apparel. Oh and tattoos – it wouldn't be Maori if there weren't



08



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10

tattoos (which is a good point; whatever it is you're illustrating find the essence and make it very visible) (**Fig.10**).

I finally get rid of the spear and add more leaves and trees. A good and easy way to do leaves is with the Lasso tool. It gives you nice edges and a lot of freedom to experiment while not contaminating the rest of the piece. Generally I



11

stay away from leaf brushes as they tend to stick out like sore thumbs if not used properly. Besides leaves are fun to paint so why not do the fun thing (**Fig.11**)!

I don't like how the central guy isn't really engaging with the viewer so I change him again. He also has a lot of over-painted marks, so I want to start fresh with him (**Fig.12**).

I notice the scene's light source is kind of losing its power so I create a new layer and set the layer to Screen. I then pick a yellowish orange and airbrush my light back in. It's pretty easy to get carried away when airbrushing light rays so I try and leave that for the end.

For detail work I try and keep the brushes as large as possible and edit the brush properties



12





13

as needed. It also helps to figure out where the eye is moving around the page and polish stuff on the way (Fig.13).

I'm trying to resolve the key points to make them readable with as little effort as possible. I'm also

flipping my canvas a lot more to catch anything I might have missed, now that I am almost done. Moving around the page I can see that there are lots of little spaces where I can hide some more color and noise. I use the Smudge tool a lot; usually I will do two or three strokes and then

smudge the transitions between the strokes to emulate (or try at least) fresh paint (Fig.14).

The final step is adding the last few touches and helping along the composition as best I can. I do a few color and level adjustments at the end to separate the colors more. I also use a slight un-sharpen mask at the end to pop the edges a little more (I find that the amount of sharpen is relative to the size of the image – e.g. bigger image = less sharpening ability). Adding the soft light rays and some dust particles should occur after sharpening and color adjustments because you want as much control over the light as possible. And I think it's done (Fig.15).

## Chase Toole

For more information please visit:

<http://chimpsmack.blogspot.com/>

Or contact them at:

[chasetoole@gmail.com](mailto:chasetoole@gmail.com)



14









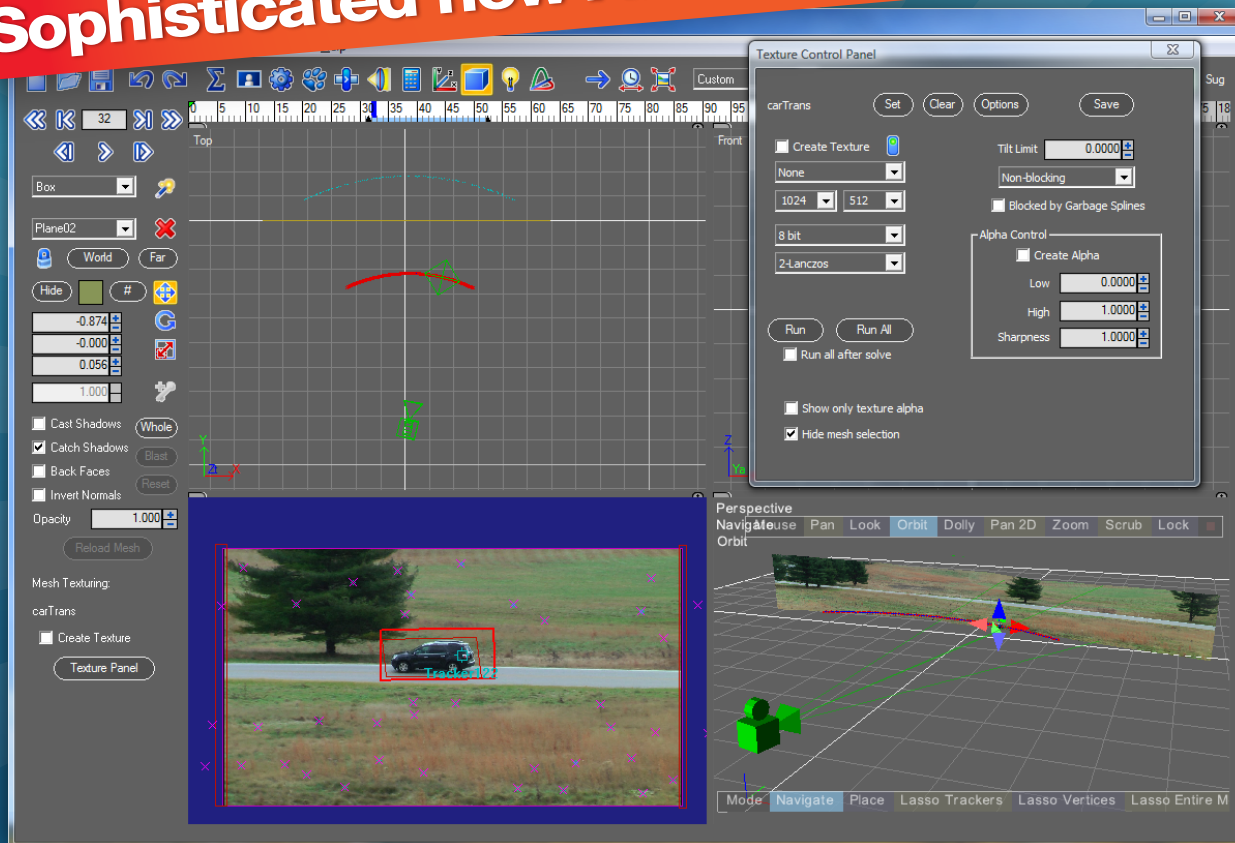




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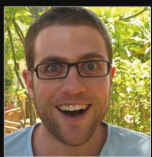
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# Pin-ups Heavy Metal



Pin-up art has dominated digital art forums for years. We are used to seeing it in many different styles and covering many different genres. With this new tutorial series, 2DArtist can proudly announce their definitive guide to pin-up art. Pin-up legend Serge Birault will guide us through the different styles and influences in pin-up art, as well as giving an insight into the fantastic painting techniques he uses to make his outstanding images.



**Chapter 1 | May Issue 065**  
Military

**Chapter 2 | June Issue 066**  
Classic

**Chapter 3 | This Issue**  
Heavy Metal

**Chapter 4 | Next Issue**  
Sci - Fi



## Chapter 03: Heavy Metal

Software Used: Photoshop

### Introduction

I'm 36 years old (soon) which means I was a teenager in the 80s. It was a very strange decade, especially for music. I listened (and sometimes still listen) to a lot of heavy metal. Metal bands were linked to very kitsch artwork, full of chrome, lighting and blonde girls in leather (now you know where my love for reflective surfaces comes from). I tried to emulate this style with my heavy metal Bambi.

### Influences

Here's a list of the artists who inspired me:

- **Doro Pesch and Warlock:** She is my principal influence for this picture. She was (and still is) the Queen of Heavy Metal. You can find a lot of photo references of how she looked in the 80s. If you look at the final image you will see that Bambi's haircut is a poor copy of Doro's.
- **Jason Edmiston** (<http://jasonedmiston.deviantart.com/>): My friend Jason is an incredibly traditional illustrator. He has done a lot of pictures that are influenced by old metal bands.
- **Didier Crisse** (<http://didier-crisse.blogspot.com/>): He is a famous French illustrator who has made a lot of comic books. He influenced the style and colors I used.
- **Hajime Sorayama:** Always my favorite influence. The great master of chrome and leather.

### The Sketch

As usual I don't spend a lot of time on the sketch (Fig.01). The composition is very simple and the pose is very classic and kitsch. Exactly what I need!

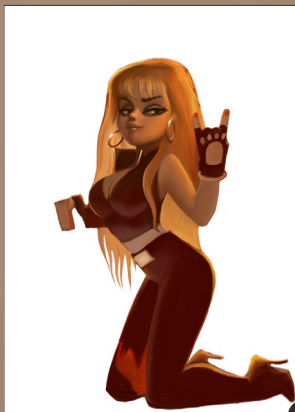


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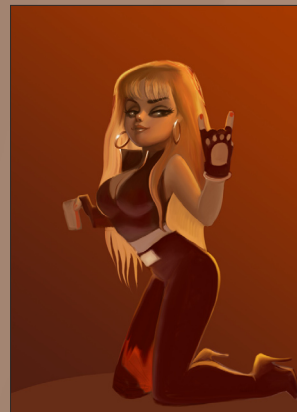
### Colors and Lights

This is the most important part of the picture. The colors are very simple because my palette is very logical. This time I use a different technique. I usually create a lot of layers and I try to separate all the different parts, but sometimes it's easier to work on a single layer and choose your tones carefully. It's kind of like doing a colored sketch and it's very useful (Fig.02).

I then cut and paste the character into a new file and clean her up with the Soft Round brush with very low opacity (we saw this point in the two last tutorials) (Fig.03). Don't forget to work in a big file format. I then create a simple background with some quick gradients (Fig.04).



03



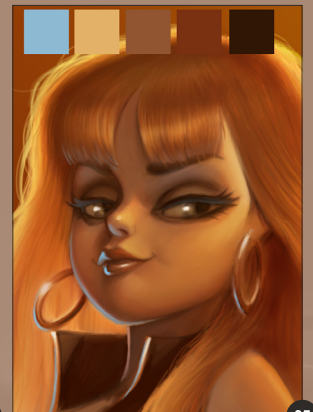
04

### Painting Techniques

In my original color sketch I create my entire color palette. Because of this I don't have to work with so many low opacity brushes. I create the whole image with the Standard brush with the opacity set between 50 and 100%. I sometimes clean the gradients with the Soft Round brush, but on this occasion the image is more painterly and doesn't require the use of many soft brushes.

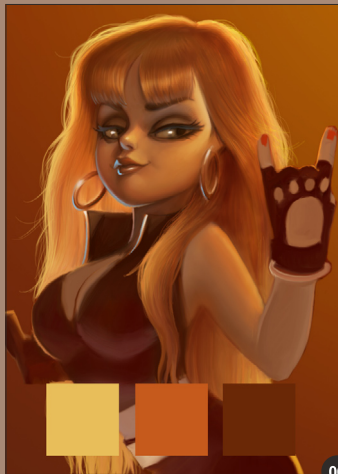
### The Head

Bambi's face is quite simple. She looks like a simple cartoon, but the retro lighting from the environment creates interesting volumes. I change her expression a bit during the process (Fig.05). I copy the flesh tones that I have



05





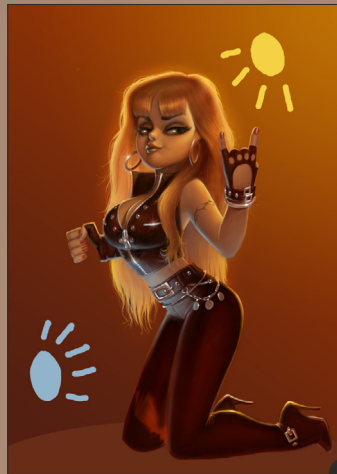
06

already created in my sketch and use them to make sure that there is enough contrast in the skin. I add a blue/cyan retro highlight in areas. For the first time you can easily see my brush strokes. Once I have done this I've finished the skin tones of the image.

The hair is not too complicated. I add a little bit of orange between the darkest and the brightest tones to emulate the transparency of the hair which would be present with this kind of lighting (Fig.06).

## The Leather and Metallic Parts

I begin by concentrating on the darkest area which is a very dark brown. I add brighter colors little by little, on new layers. Then I add the retro



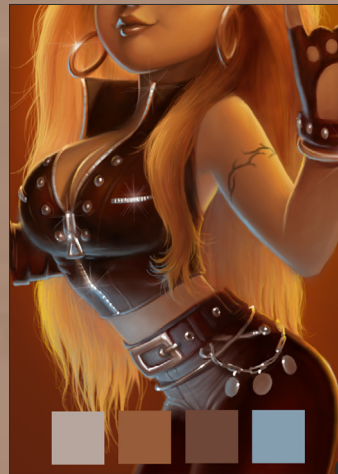
07

blue light (Fig.07). Leather is less reflective than vinyl or rubber so the contrast has to look soft. The metallic parts are done with very few colors. I create a lot of Sorayama-like halos to add to the kitsch effect (Fig.08).

## The Guitar

I try to find the most emblematic guitar of the 80s heavy metal scene and I settle on the flying V model. In the beginning I thought a red guitar was a good idea, but I've decided to go with chrome as I think it will be more interesting to do (Fig.09).

Chrome is a very special metal. It looks like a mirror so it reflects its entire environment. You have to keep in mind that the object has its own volume and shape. The most difficult part is to



08

find the correct gradient to use. In reality the guitar would not reflect the floor and it would probably only reflect the sky, which is a kind of brown/red color. I choose to cheat a little bit as I often do. I do all the parts on different layers and merge them all when I'm satisfied.

## The Logo

I'm not a designer so I'm not familiar with logos and fonts. There are probably a lot of better solutions than mine, but I want it to have a handmade look to it so I only use the font as a selection tool. You can easily find this font on the internet; it's inspired by the Iron Maiden logo. The chrome will reflect the sky and a floor again (Fig.10).

## Background

I try not to spend too much time on this step.

I only add the shine the lightning and few reflections on the floor.

## Adjustments

In order to give it an 80s appearance I remove a bit of the blue color everywhere in the picture. Then I just do some corrections to the contrast and it's done (Fig.11-12).

## Serge Birault

For more information please visit:

<http://www.sergebirault.fr/sb/index.php>

Or contact them at:

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10



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## Chapter 1 | June Issue 066

Concept

## Chapter 2 | This Issue

Adding the Sky

## Chapter 3 | Next Issue

Adding Elements

## Chapter 4 | September Issue 069

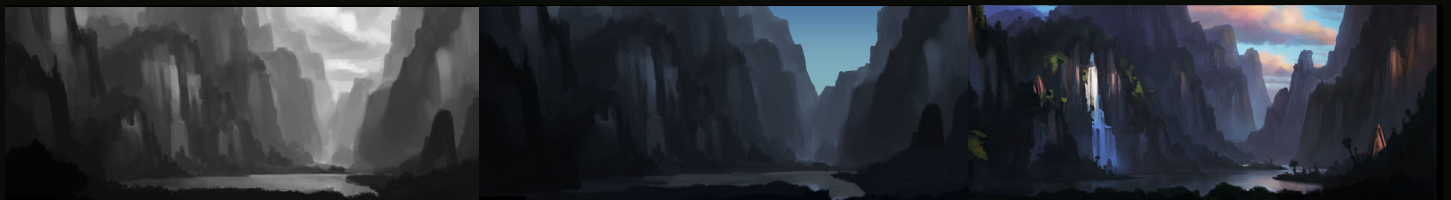
Lighting

## Chapter 5 | October Issue 070

Transforming the Time of Day

Matte painting is becoming more and more important in the CG industry. The backdrops of some of the most epic scenes in films have been created by matte painters who have used the techniques touched upon in this tutorial. This eBook will talk you through an entire matte painting and show you how to add photos to your canvas and then integrate them into your scene. This is a must-have for any experienced or novice matte painter.

# MATTE PAINTING





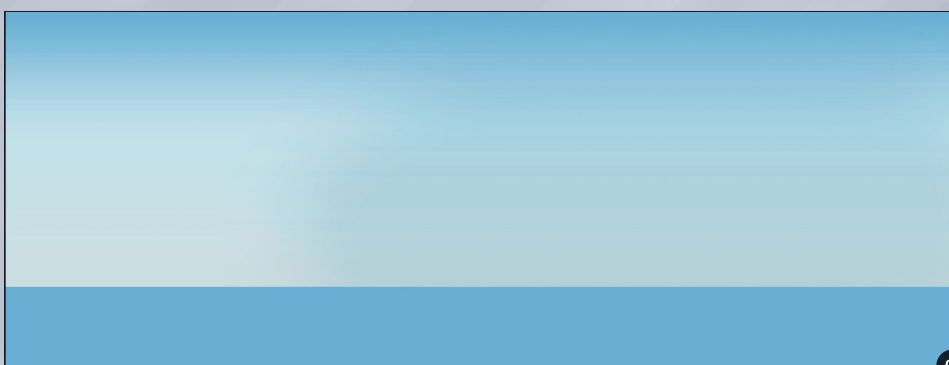
## Chapter 02: Adding the Sky

Software Used: Photoshop

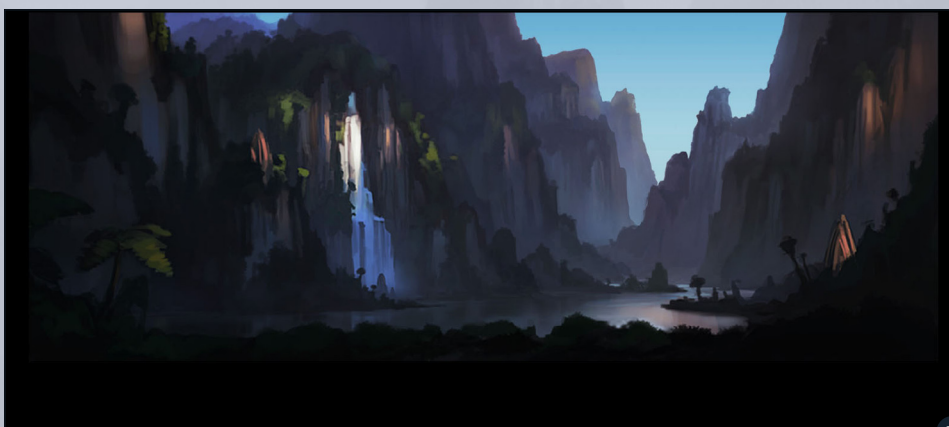
### Sky Gradients

Now we can start the creation of the final image. The first step is to resize the whole painting to a large size; I chose 4096 pixels wide. I usually paint in this resolution because it is double the standard film resolution and once it is resized to 2048 pixels all images become consistent. I can also paint in that resolution using standard Photoshop brushes without worrying that it will look too painterly at the end. I actually made the image even bigger than that in the end, because I kept the black borders around the edge. It is a good habit for you to adopt because sometimes you might want to change the composition or show part of the image that is outside of the frame in animation. This way you still have additional painting space available to you.

I started to create the sky from a basic gradient (Fig.01). This way I was able to keep my work clean and start adding different cloud layers on top of each other. Having all the cloud separately on different layers helps if you were ever to animate the image. The ability to move them independently would make the shot much more believable.



01



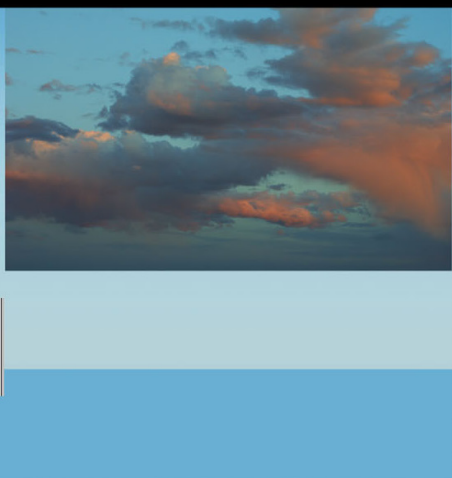
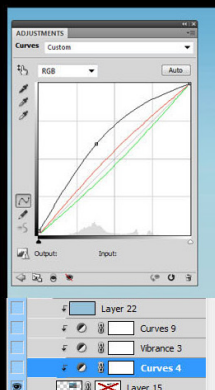
02

### Placing your Concept Sketch

On top of the sky gradient I placed our concept sketch to have better idea of where to place the clouds (Fig.02). I also kept the original finished concept on top of all the layers and turned it on and off from time to time to compare the progress, and to make sure I was not inventing anything to different from the original idea.

### Adding the First Cloud Layer

The key is to place the clouds furthest away first. It is also very important to make sure the lighting direction in the photos matches the lighting in the sketch. As you can see the horizon line on the photograph did not match the horizon line in the sketch (Fig.03). I decided to try this photograph anyway, and it turned out



03



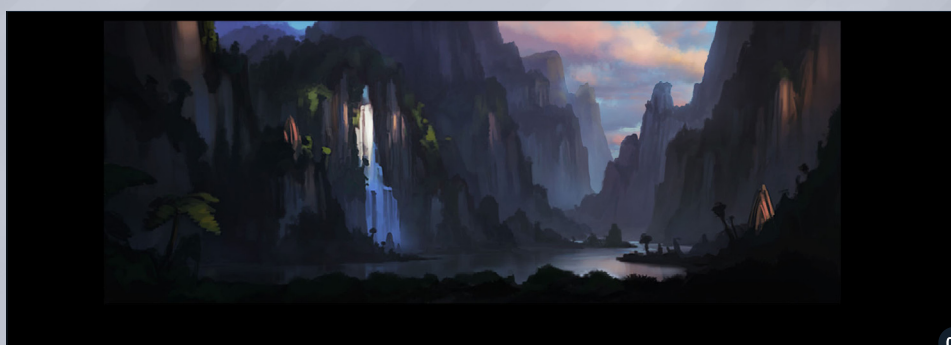
to work ok for me. I color corrected the picture using Curves. To make it look a little more vibrant I placed the layer of haze above the clouds. You will see me using a similar method many times. I regularly color correct pictures to make them match the image, and then on top of that I place a layer the same color as the sky and change the blending modes and tone down the levels. This is so that there is an atmosphere that makes the image more believable.

## Pasting Clouds from the Concept Sketch

For the largest cloud I had to do more work because I went through my photo library and I could not find anything with a similar shape. So I decided to bring the largest cloud from the concept sketch and start from there (Fig.04).

## Color Correcting the Cloud Photo

This photo (Fig.05) looked like what I needed for the bottom part of my large cloud. I color corrected the photograph and then painted in the layer mask to reveal just the portion that matched the concept. It is valuable at this point to mention a little bit about Curve adjustments.



04



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This is a powerful tool and I use it all the time. I color corrected every channel independently.

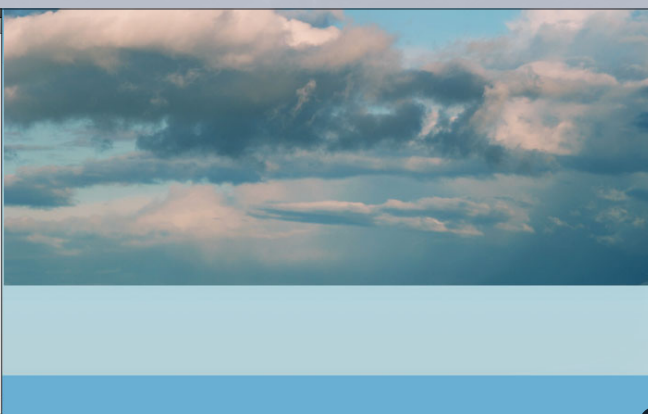
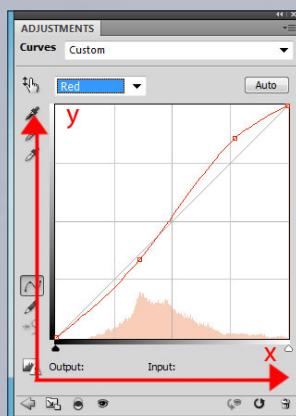
## Color Correcting the Red Channel

First I color corrected the red channel. I wanted to see more red in the area of the clouds that are lit by the sun and less in the shadows, because our shadows in the concept sketch are

more violet and the highlights more red (Fig.06).

Curve adjustments work in the following way.

You have an X and Y axis. On the X axis there is the input of the values in the red channel (first you have to select the channel you want to correct). On the Y axis is the output. You create a dot on the line simply by clicking it. In this case I lowered the values of the red channel in the darks and increased the values in high tones.



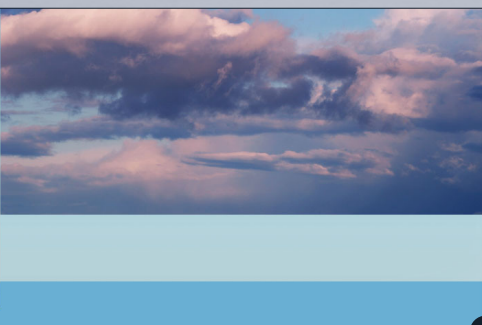
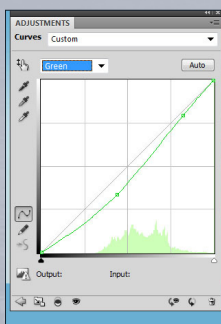
06

## Color Correcting the Green Channel

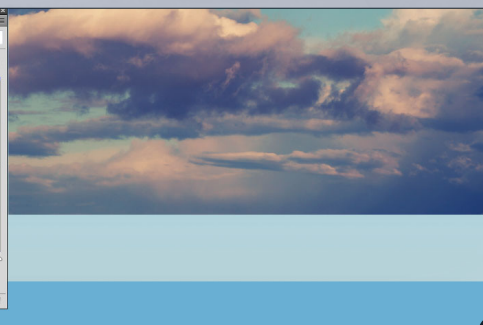
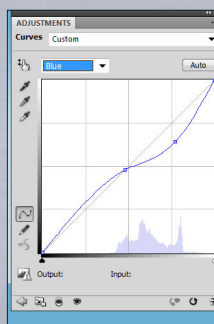
The next step was to decrease the green values in the shadows. I kept the green values for lit areas of the cloud (Fig.07).

## Color Correcting the Blue Channel

Finally I color corrected the blue channel (Fig.08). The cloud as it is didn't match the

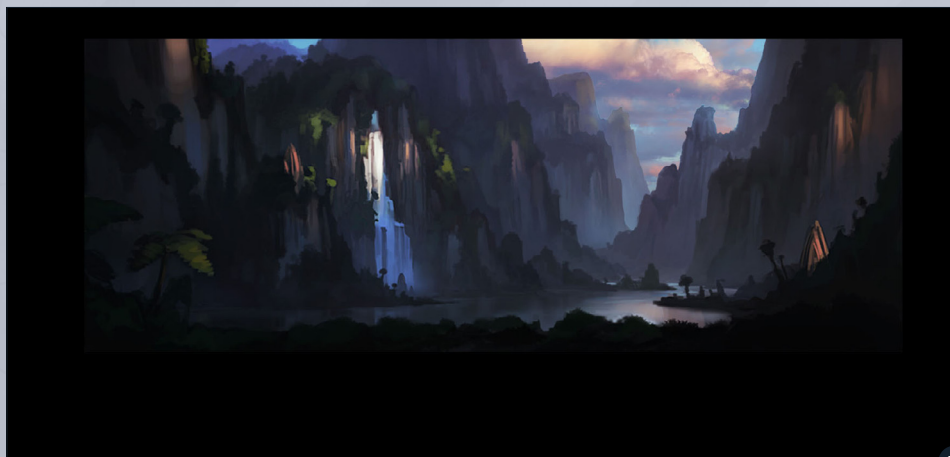


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sketch perfectly, but was there mainly to show the shadowed side of the clouds because if you remember I only used just the bottom of it.

Here is the how the images looked like during their progression and the image with the clouds in place (**Fig.09 – 11**).

I wanted the clouds to have a puffy look. To achieve this I used another photo of a cloud which I incorporated into the scene (**Fig.12**).

I extracted the cloud using the red channel on the photograph because this channel contrasts

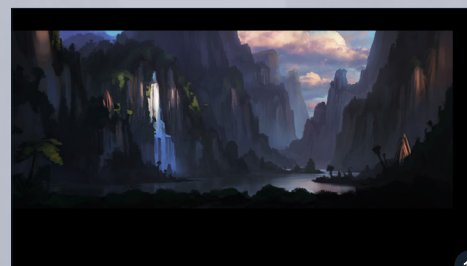
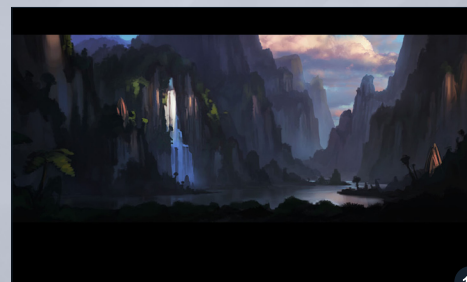
most with the color of the cloud and the sky. I made a copy of this channel and then I color corrected it to create a mask for selection.

Because the color corrected channel was not perfect I had to paint out the grays and noise with white (**Fig.13**).

This is the mask I used for selection (**Fig.14**).

And this is how the cloud looked after extraction on the sky gradient (**Fig.15**).

For the left part of the cloud I used another photograph and the same method to adjust the colors as I did in the previous one (**Fig.16**).



In the meantime I also created the sky's mid-ground cloud, but I decided not to use it because although we have this cloud in the concept, the sky looked too busy.

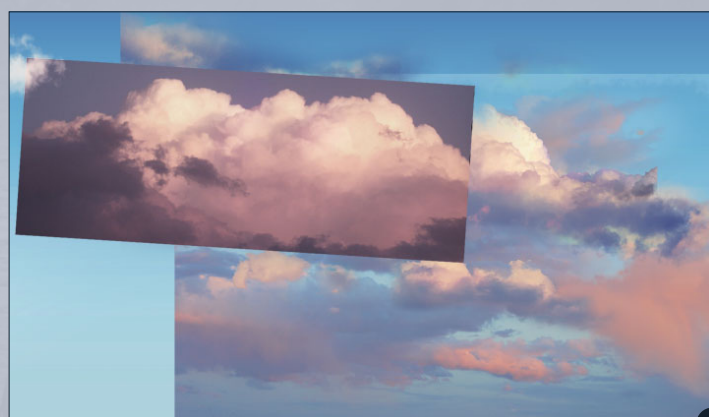
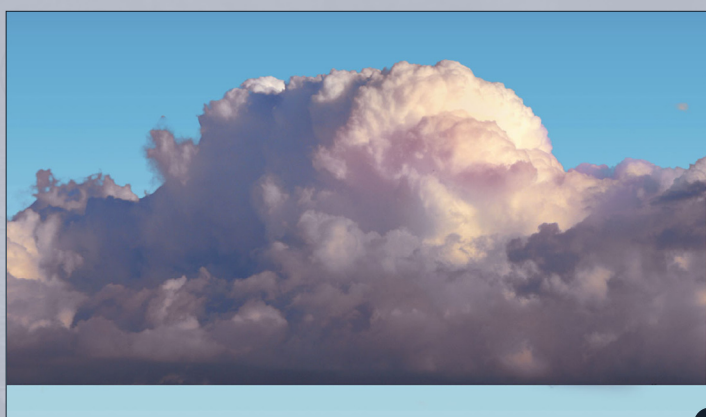
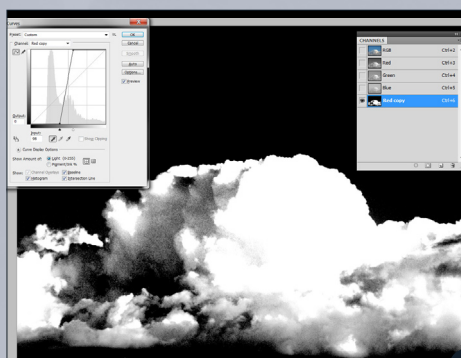
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### **Pin-Up**

Chapter 4: Sci - Fi by Serge Birault

### **Matte Painting**

Chapter 3: Adding Elements by Peter Swigut

### **Character Portrayal**

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Image By Dan Crossland



You can tell a lot about a person by their face. You can tell their state of mind, you can tell where they are from, you can even make a guess about their character. For this reason being able to portray the features of a face correctly when doing character concepts is vital. In this series of tutorials our artists will be looking at how you would tackle designing characters with very specific features, but they will not just be talking about it in the context of one character. They will be showing us how to paint certain features that can be applied to different character types such as gaunt, obese, bruised etc. If you are into creating character concepts and want to add story to the face of your design this is the series for you.



# Character Portrayal

**This Issue** Chapter 01 | Gaunt   **Next Issue** Chapter 02 | Child   **September Issue 069** Chapter 03 | Elderly Man

**October Issue 070** Chapter 04 | Obese   **November Issue 071** Chapter 05 | Beaten Up   **December Issue 072** Chapter 06 | Tattooed



## Chapter 01 - Gaunt

Software used: Photoshop

### Creating Characters

Characters are by far my favorite subject to paint, so when tasked with doing just that there's always a little buzz about it for me! The sky is the limit with character painting, but in this case I do have a buzz word to give a little guidance, which is "gaunt".

When I first started painting creating characters was an exciting prospect and I wanted to make them as original as I could. So, naturally, I pelted my characters with ten thousand things; earrings, belts, accessories, feathers, satchels, boots, beads... you name it, they had to have it! A few years on and I've learnt a few lessons. The most obvious being that to create a character you don't need to give them an identity by saddling them with a ridiculous amount of stuff. It's my opinion that nothing is really original anymore. I don't mean that in a depressing way, it's just that I often find myself in the confusing situation of wanting to create an original character, rather than a good character. Creating an original character is one way to set yourself a goal you'll probably constantly battle with, whereas creating one that is good, well that's not so scary.



03

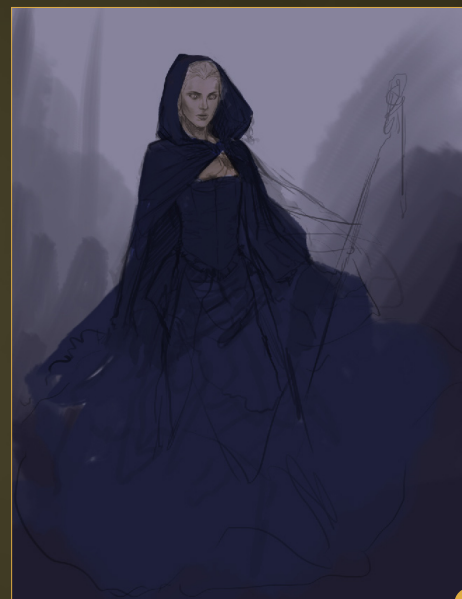


01

Let me also say that I don't think any character I create is the greatest thing I've ever done, not by a long shot, but there is something I like about each and everyone one of them. There's also a ton of things I don't, but I'm not focusing on that right now!

So here I am with a blank page and the word "gaunt" floating around in my head. At this point I have no idea what I want to create. So, as I so often do, I take a fairly light gray color and just start blocking in a silhouette – this is how I begin a painting 90% of the time. If you're not a hundred percent sure about what you want, it can be a really good way of "finding" the image. Having settled on a rough shape I begin to draw a more detailed sketch above it (in a slightly darker tone). I kind of like the rough sketch at this point! It's fairly messy and she's obviously missing some limbs, but the general suggestion is there for me to work on. It's fine to work the sketch up a little more if you're more comfortable with it (Fig.01).

There is an absolute plethora of different custom brushes available in every corner of the internet and whilst some of them are great, I've always thought you can't go wrong with a basic brush. For the entire sketch and painting, I'll be using the standard Photoshop brush 23 (chalk 23 pixels).



02

I merge the silhouette and sketch layer together and set that layer to Multiply, making it transparent. Then on a layer below I start to block in some base colors. They're very crude at this point and I am not trying to be neat. It's just about setting a mood with the colors. I'm also not entirely sure where I want to go with the color scheme at this point, so these blue/gray tones are fairly neutral and can be worked into different colors easily enough (Fig.02).

From this point onwards everything I paint is above the sketch layer. I also flatten the layers throughout the painting process, which isn't essential; it's just my preference. During this process I rarely stay on one section for too long. I hop to different features just to make sure I don't get too bored working on the same section for too long. It also helps to come back to sections later on as you'll notice the mistakes more easily (Fig.03).

### The Face

The section that I will always work on first, however, is the face. This is the point when I need to think about my buzz word; "gaunt". This is a chance to bring out her features, giving her a gaunt appearance. Normally, if I was painting a young lady I'd give her a relatively smooth face; this character, on the other hand, obviously needs to look gaunt. To do this,





04

I'm giving her some pretty harsh shadows as part of her facial structure, especially around her cheekbones. I'm also adding in highlights along the top of her cheek and giving her fairly dark eyes and shadows underneath too, to emphasize her eye sockets (**Fig.04**).

As I refine the details of the painting you'll notice subtle changes to her face (**Fig.05**). Throughout this process I'm adding more highlights and shadows, adding to her gaunt appearance. I also add in some pinkish tones on her lips and a little on her cheeks. This adds a bit of warmth to her face. Although I want her to look gaunt, I don't want her to look like a total corpse! So I'm warming up the tones just a touch.

## Flip

Don't forget to flip your image! Flipping is a great way to gain a new perspective on a painting (**Fig.06**). It really helps you notice mistakes. They usually stick out like a sore thumb once flipped! Try and do this every hour or so; that way you won't reach the end of a painting and realize it looks terrible flipped the other way (Image > Image Rotation > Flip Canvas Horizontal).

## Details

I said earlier that I don't think you need to give a character a large number of accessories to



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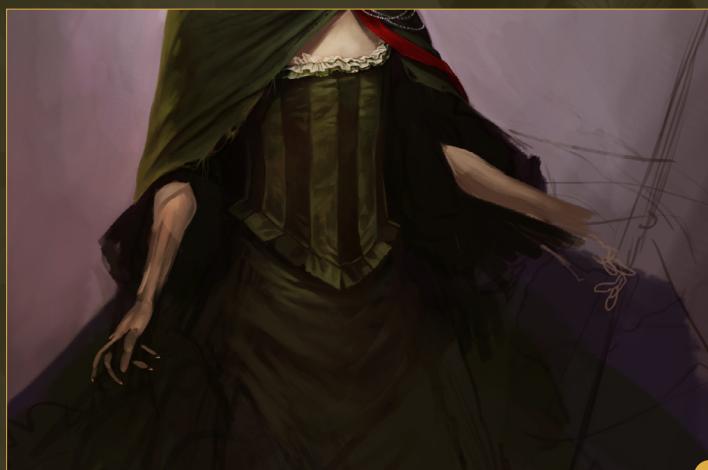


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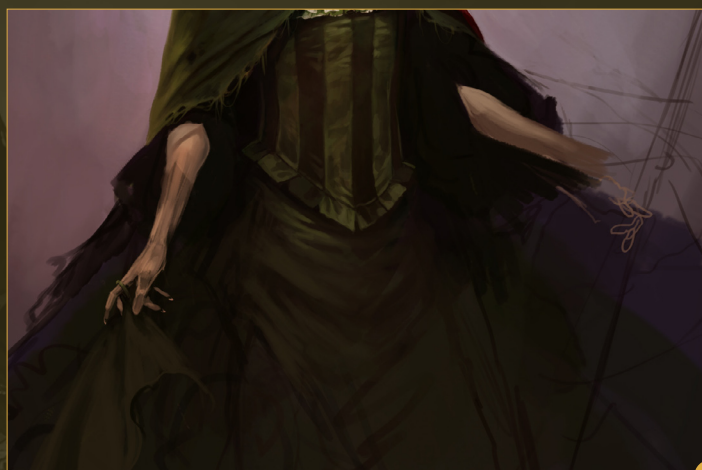
give them an identity. That isn't to say that I don't think they should have any. It can be a great way of adding interest, like a little spark to grab your attention (**Fig.07**). You can see I've added in a pin to her cape. These elements can be read into differently by different individuals,

which is good because I like people to be able to make their own judgments about things (**Fig.08**). It could be a family crest on her pin, a symbol of a society or something else. Whatever you want it to be! I add in a little red ribbon/sash too; it adds in a little splash of color (**Fig.09**).





10



11

## Hands

Hands can be the bane of an artist's existence, especially when learning. I know I struggled with them quite a lot. Naturally, practice helps. So don't cover them up or hide them away, paint them! When I first sketched out the rough idea, one hand was holding up a section of the dress and the other was holding some sort of staff (although it didn't take me too long to change my mind about that) (Fig.10 – 12). It felt a bit cheesy, so I'm opting for no staff at all, and a fairly relaxed gesture for both hands. For each hand I start with a very rough dabbing of paint, just to try and pin down the pose of the hand. Then I gradually build up the structure of the hand and add in some highlights around the knuckles and thumb, and also some pinkish tones on the tips of her fingers. I'm also keeping in mind my buzz word, "gaunt", giving her fairly boney fingers (Fig.13 – 16).

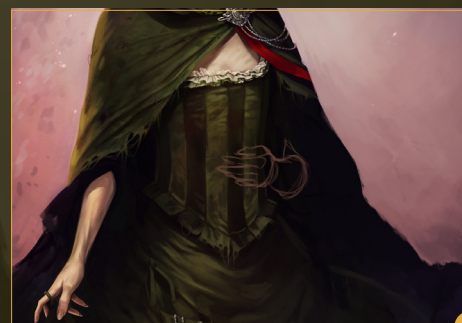
Try and think about the structure of the bones when painting, I personally find that it helps. Look at your own hands and if you're struggling there are plenty of references available.

## Fabric

Fabric is something that I love to work on, which is quite obvious with the amount of dresses I paint! You can see from the first sketch I don't really bother to detail clothing all that much, I prefer to just paint it in. I tend to block in the colors and very crudely start to add in the folds of the fabric, just by adding in basic highlights



12



13



14



15



16





(Fig.17 – 19). From there I refine in my usual manner, gradually working up details and more folds. I add a little stitching detail in places, and I also make the seams of the fabric a little rough around the edges. I don't want it to look too perfect. Again, if fabric is a sticking point, use references, your own clothes or have a look at stock.

## Final touches

Things are coming together and are pretty much finished at this point. For some final touches, I add in some ruffles around her sleeves which tie in with the lace on her dress (Fig.20). You might also notice that the colors in the background are a little stronger. I've added in some warmer peachy tones on an overlay layer (Fig.21). There are also a few specs/orbs in the same color over the lower section of the dress which helps to tie it into the background.

I hope you enjoyed my tutorial and have fun painting your own characters (Fig.22).

## Charlie Bowater

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# UNDER THE RAIN

MAKING OF BY ALEX ANDREYEV

This month's Making Of gives us an insight into the dream world of Alex Andreyev. Alex shows us in great detail how he turns his rough value sketch into a stunning full color illustration.

“For me only a mystical revelation can be considered true art. Other products of intellectual speculations only interest me from a technological point of view”

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## Making of Under the Rain

Software Used Photoshop

Of course, in any piece of art the idea comes first. I wanted to try to paint something that showed the boundary between a dream and being awake, when your consciousness is just about to start a strange journey.

For me only a mystical revelation can be considered true art. Other products of intellectual speculations only interest me from a technological point of view. My favorite paintings are created during insight, or a sudden connection with a certain field of information. These paintings should be an interpretation of my vision, using all of my life experience to create my work. Carlos Castaneda gave a definition of the creative process, with which I mostly agree: "The Nagual Elias, as a solitary dreamer, visited, let's say, the junkyard of infinity, when no one was around – and copied whatever he saw, but never knew what those things were used for, or their source".

I have tried out various techniques, including traditional inks, pens and brushes. I've also experimented with digital art, and now I use Adobe Photoshop and Corel Painter all the time. I just use brushes, no fancy stuff or filters. By



using this limited toolset I am able to achieve stylistic consistency throughout my portfolio. I focus more on the expression of my creative concepts than on the technology or tools. While working in the digital medium, I am free of the limitations of traditional tools, such as drying oil paint, changing gouache color or etching line width. Also I am able to constantly see and control the final result of my work during its creation, and that suits my style.

Besides the basic Photoshop brushes I used three custom brushes for this image, for the rust, rain and trees. The rain was for the creation of the falling rain drops, the tree brush was for creating the structure of the foliage in the

background and the rust brush was applied to a lot of the elements. I have included the base files for these so you can make your own brushes.

The first part to creating the painting was transferring the picture from my head to the canvas without heavy losses in perception. I started by creating a canvas that was 3000 x 4000px and filled the background with a primary color. Using the rust brush I painted the basic contours of the future figures and started to build the general composition (**Fig.01**).

On a new layer I used the rain brush to add the falling raindrops, and plan the patches of light on the floating man, the umbrella, the streetlight and the girl. In general I try to do each new variation on a new layer so it is possible to return to the previous version and see if the image has improved (**Fig.02**).

I then created a separate layer set to Overlay mode and using a basic soft brush, I created the areas where the light was glowing and reflecting. The light is coming from the streetlight which is outside the frame (**Fig.03**).

Using the rust brush I traced the basic details of the umbrella, raincoat, bandage, cords, pipe, asphalt and pools of water (**Fig.04**).





I then create the fencing based on traditional railings that you commonly see in Saint Petersburg (**Fig.05**).

I then duplicated that part of the image so that it filled the width of the image (**Fig.06**). I also added patches of light to the railing in different areas so that it breaks up the pattern and makes each part of the railing look original.

Using the tree brush I drew some subtle foliage in the background. The foliage need to look wet and heavy as the leaves sagged under the weight of the rainwater. I drew the electric wires going from the streetlight using the basic brush (**Fig.07**).

Using the rust brush I continued to add to the details (**Fig.08**).

Then I added some fish. This was very important as before this there was no contrast between the left and the right part of the picture. This makes you question whether the scene is underwater. It is important to reflect the illumination correctly, even on small features like this (**Fig.09**). The unreality of the scene should be combined with realistic illumination to make it more interesting.

The final step was to add some patches of light and to correct the pose of the girl. I also changed the arrangement of the cords and bandages on the man (**Fig.10**).

## Alex Andreyev

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<http://www.behance.net/alexandreev>

Or contact them at:

[andreevbox@gmail.com](mailto:andreevbox@gmail.com)

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05



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08



09



10







# DIGITAL ART MASTERS VOLUME 5



With the release of 3DTotal's book, *Digital Art Masters: Volume 5*, we have some exclusive chapters for you...

This is more than just an artwork book. Not only does it feature full-color, full-page images, but each artist has given a detailed description, in their own words, of the creation process behind each piece of published artwork. And they've done it especially for this book!

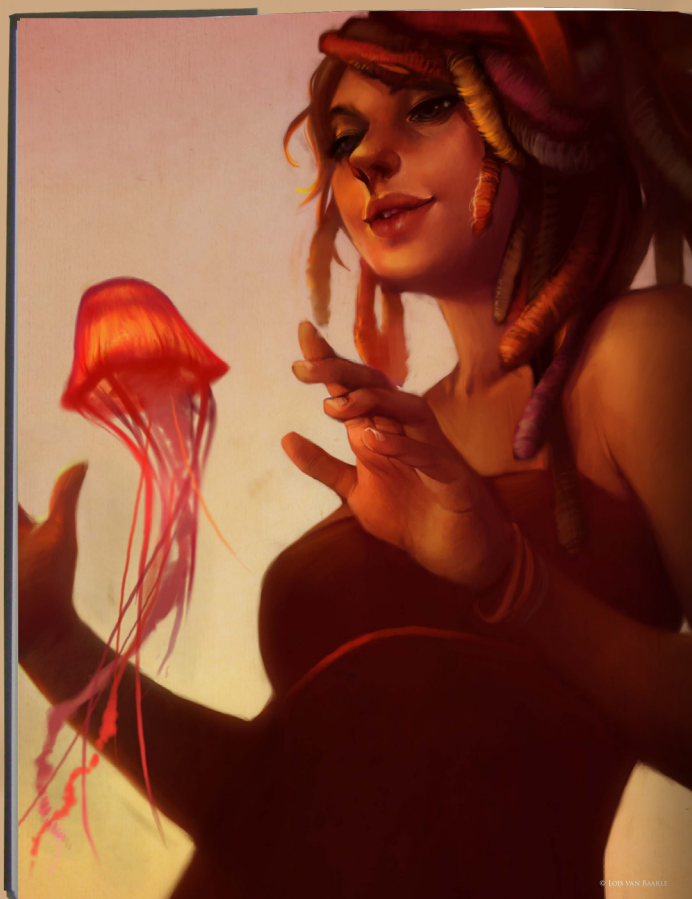
This month we feature:

## "EVENING GLOW"

BY LOIS VAN BAARLE







## EVENING GLC

BY LOIS VAN BAARLE

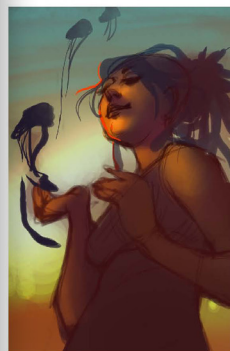
JOB TITLE: Animator / Illustrator  
SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop



### INTRODUCTION

I've been drawing characters with digital media for years, ever since I began messing around with the smudge tool in Photoshop elements when I was 14. I started out very cartoony but developed a fondness for digital painting a few years ago, realizing that this could give my characters much more depth and mass, making them more real and believable somehow. Around the time that I drew this image, I wanted to push myself a little further and create more of a realistic feel than I had done in my previous images by adding more detail (especially in the hands and face), and working with a more

COMPOSITION, POSE AND OTHER ASPECTS ARE ALL SUBJECT TO CHANGE THROUGHOUT THE DRAWING PROCESS TO SUIT THE FEELING I HAVE IN MIND



atmospheric light source – that of a sunset. I was inspired by occasions of experiencing sunsets on the beach during the summer and the serene, timeless feeling this evoked.

### PROCESS

My work always starts very rough because I never have a specific image in mind when I start drawing. I usually just have a certain atmosphere or feeling in my head that I want to get down. Composition, pose and other aspects are all subject to change throughout the drawing process to suit the feeling I have in mind (Fig.01). Basically, the early phases of the drawing – the sketch, rough colors, and so on – are phases in which I just slap colors on the image and play around with different approaches until I like what I see and can go into more detail.

By this point (Fig.02), I was happy with the lighting (especially the glow coming from behind her head), the color scheme (deep blues and purples against a sunset sky), and the overall composition of the image. This is where I merged the sketch lines with the coloring layer for the character, and just started painting freely, letting go of the lines

CHARACTERS

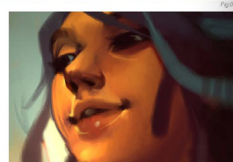
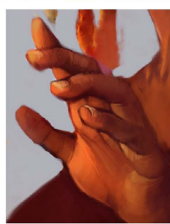
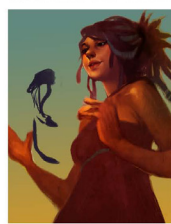
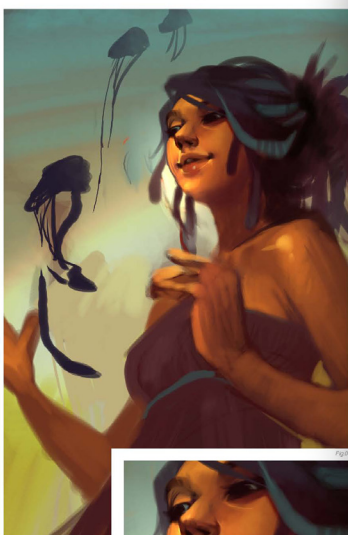
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drawn in the sketch and basically sculpting the forms with the colors I had chosen. I generally work with very few layers and for this image I used just three from this point on – one for the sky, one for the character, and one for the jellyfish. In the case of this drawing, I just used the Standard Round Photoshop brush, using a varying flow based on how soft or hard I wanted the brushstrokes to be.

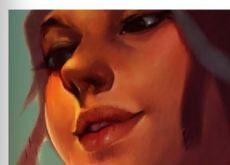
Here (Fig.03) I was working quite roughly and trying to introduce more detail into the picture. This part of the process was particularly challenging for me. I had a hard time painting realistic features onto the face (Fig.04) without losing the perspective from the original sketch. Many aspects of the drawing gradually changed during this phase, especially the composition. Although I lost some of the feeling in the original sketch, I intuitively moved towards a new composition where more space was created in the centre of the image for the jellyfish and the expression of the character changed.

At this point (Fig.05), I had to stop myself from focusing on the details too much. I made some changes to the background (a simpler gradient), reduced the number of jellyfish to just one and added a soft texture to the character. This not only helped to give the image a more organic feel, but also had an effect on the colors, which became deeper and more reddish as a result. By making these changes, I had a better notion of how the final image was going to look, allowing me to get a good idea of what needed to change before the image was complete.

One thing I was not happy with at this point was the hand. Using my own hand as reference, I started painting a more realistic hand that stood out a little more, creating more depth and catching some of the orange light (Fig.06). As with the face, it was hard for me to approach



the hand realistically without having it seem out of place compared to the rest of the drawing. Making it work was a question of keeping at it and stopping every now and then to zoom out and check for consistency over the whole image. This part of the drawing process was the part in which I pushed myself further than I usually would have in terms of detail (Fig.07). However, some parts of the drawing, such as the body and the background, were left quite simple in order to make the detail on other parts stand out more.

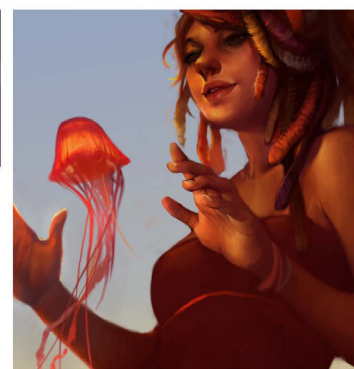


By this point (Fig.08), I was adding the finishing touches and moving towards the final image. This involved painting the final details (the jellyfish, bracelets, etc) and shifting the composition around a bit. The image needed to start coming together and forming a finished whole.

By the final phase, I'd added a texture onto the background, edited the colors a little bit using the color balance tool, and added a subtle backlight effect. Finally I stopped working on the picture and just called it finished, mostly because I was satisfied with it, but also because I had to force myself to just let it go and move on!

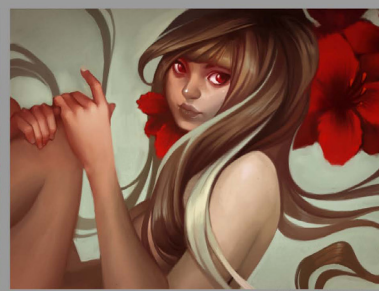
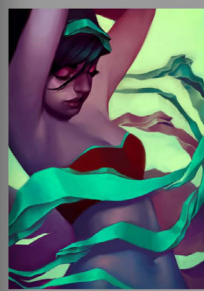
### CONCLUSION

In the end, the drawing didn't turn out exactly how I had planned it (I wanted something with more movement and life), but I was nevertheless happy with the result. I just let it evolve naturally, focusing mainly on achieving



the right atmosphere and letting the rest follow, and this worked out pretty well in the end. Although adding more detail and using references was partially an experiment, I realized that this can give an image a lot of added value. I definitely see this image as a big step forward in the evolution of my digital painting skills.

### ARTIST PORTFOLIO



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CHARACTERS

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CHARACTERS



# DIGITAL ART MASTERS

## :VOLUME 5

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# DIGITAL ART MASTERS



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